



THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

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NEW YORK, NY 10021

January 29, 1979

JOSHUA LEDERBERG

PRESIDENT

Dr. Lewis M. Wannamaker  
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Dear Dr. Wannamaker:

Thank you for your letter of January 24th. I would certainly have been delighted to second your nomination of Mac McCarty. Considering how often it has been said that Avery should have been awarded the Prize long since, but that he died before the Nobel Committee could get around to it, this would certainly be a timely proposal. However, I believe that it would also focus some embarrassment on the Nobel Committee and that this would occasion some resistance to the award to McCarty without some further bolstering.

The crucial element, in my opinion, is the brief paragraph in your nomination that points to McCarty as having provided the chemical expertise. I have wondered for many years about the precise role of the various authors of the signal paper and not a great deal has been said about it. I am sure you know how modest, even shy, Mac is in discussing such a point. In fact one of my motives in encouraging the celebration we are holding next Friday was precisely to try to get some more forthcoming testimony on the inside history of the years just before the publication. If we could just get some documentable evidence on McCarty's personal role I think that would be just what was necessary to tip the balance. I will be doing whatever I can that is both effective and discreet toward that end.

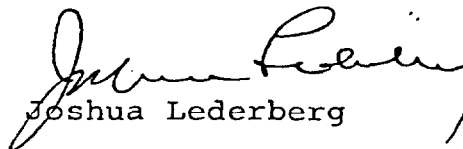
Dr. Lewis M. Wannamaker  
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- 2 -

Any suggestions that you might have would be most gratefully received.

I am sorry you will not be able to make the next meeting of the Visiting Committee but hope that we can find some more convenient occasions.

Yours sincerely,

  
Joshua Lederberg

Encl: Souvenir (J. Exp. Med.)

*file copies under  
M. McCarty - Nobel Prize  
~~L. Lederberg (A)~~  
copy chron. (P)*